



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Valerie Ervin

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Montgomery County Continues Free Nutritional Summer Food Program

*Councilmember Ervin, Board of Education President Barclay
and MCPS Superintendent Starr to Celebrate Program on
Thursday, June 27, at Springbrook High School*

ROCKVILLE, Md., June 18, 2013—Montgomery County Councilmember Valerie Ervin, Montgomery County Board of Education President Christopher Barclay and Montgomery County Superintendent of Schools Joshua P. Starr will join other community members at 12 noon on Thursday, June 27, at Springbrook High School in White Oak to discuss the importance of continuing the free Montgomery County Public Schools Summer Food program.

Springbrook High School is located at 201 Valley Brook Drive.

“In 2007, I initiated a working group that recommended expanding the Summer Food program to more needy kids throughout the county,” said Councilmember Ervin. “This year, I am happy to see sites serving nutritious, hot lunches, which will help increase participation.”

Each summer, MCPS serves children free meals as part of a variety of summer programs. In 2007, there were 79 sites. This summer, nearly 9,000 students will receive meals at 117 locations, including the eight walk-in locations, where children 18 and under can come in for a free meal. Last year, the Summer Food Service Program served more than 217,000 meals.

The first walk-in center opened in 2007. The Summer Food Program is aimed at increasing the number of eligible children who have healthy food options during the summer.

“Access to high-quality, nutritious food for children is one of my top priorities,” said Councilmember Ervin. “Low income children are at the greatest risk of food insecurity and

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often the meals that they do receive lack the vitamins and nutrients essential for their development, which can have a dramatic impact on student achievement.”

As of October 2012, about 33 percent (49,344) of Montgomery County students qualified for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs), a poverty indicator and a figure that may be higher due to underreporting. While the lunch participation rate for students eligible for FARMs has fluctuated, MCPS Food and Nutrition Services reports an increase in participation in the school breakfast and supper programs.

“Many children depend on the meals they receive at school as their primary source of nutrition,” said Councilmember Ervin. “The Summer Food Program is a key link to providing nutrition to students—especially the one-third of students who qualify for free and reduced meals—when school is out.”

Montgomery County Public Schools has sponsored the Summer Food Program since 1976. The program is operated with federal funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. From 2006 to 2012, participation in the program has increased by 24 percent.

This summer, the Summer Food Program is implementing a new program at school-based sites serving large groups of children. At these sites, the kitchens will provide both cold and hot meals through the cafeteria lines. This service will be offered at 47 locations around the county.

The free, walk-in programs will operate through late Aug. 23 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at most sites. The programs are available at the following sites:

- Argyle Middle School, 2400 Bel Pre Road, Silver Spring
- Fox Chapel Elementary School, 19315 Archdale Road, Germantown
- Gaithersburg Elementary School, 35 N. Summit Ave., Gaithersburg
- Maryvale Elementary School, 1000 First Street, Rockville
- Kennedy High School, 1901 Randolph Road, Silver Spring
- Millian Memorial UMC, 13016 Parkland Drive, Rockville
- New Creation Church, 11005 Dayton Street, Wheaton
- Seneca Creek Community Church, 13 Firstfield Road, Gaithersburg

Along with the Summer Food Program, Councilmember Ervin continues her work on initiatives and long-term solutions to combat poverty and to assist working families.

Some of these efforts include: championing the County’s Prevailing Wage and Displaced Worker laws; funding the Working Parents Assistance Program, which provides child care benefits for working families; advocating for State funding for the Maryland Meals for Achievement school breakfast program; funding the Working Families Income Supplement, which provides a local tax credit for those who qualify for the State’s Earned Income Credit; the implementation of a county-wide Food Recovery Network; and a county-wide farmers market Double Dollars Program to increase access to healthy foods for low-income residents.

Councilmember Ervin screened HBO’s *American Winter*, a powerful documentary that follows the personal stories of families struggling in the aftermath of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, on May 29. The screening was an outgrowth of the community conversation, “Raise Your Voice to SNAP the Silence” on poverty in February.

“The film showed how easy it is for families who are living paycheck to paycheck to end up in poverty and the tremendous impact it has on children,” said Councilmember Ervin.